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ABSTRACT

Proponents argue that the competition inherent in publicly funded tuition voucher programs will increase school quality and family choice, but voucher systems would be subject to the same forces that shape public schools. The efficiency and effectiveness of voucher plans must be assessed in light of those educational goals important to the state--socialization of children to a common culture and education for citizenship--and those primarily important to the individual--preparation for further education or occupational life, equal educational opportunity, and education in each child's best interests. None of these goals would be well served by a free market voucher system due to information problems, some parents' preference for exclusiveness, and the importance of geographical proximity to parents' school choices. A dialectic between equal opportunity and education in the best interest of the individual child involves such issues as equal access and who knows the child's best interests. Although vouchers are intended to deregulate education, state bureaucracies would need to regulate and monitor finances, school quality, curricula, and policies for personnel and admissions. The inevitability of regulation reflects a fundamental problem: that the voucher concept attempts to achieve public goals through the private market without the public accountability provided by pluralistic decision-making. (MJL)

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EDUCATION BY VOUCHER: PRIVATE CHOICE AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST*

by

Arthur E. Wise
Linda Darling-Hammond

OVERVIEW

Recent dissatisfaction with public education has led to numerous proposals for increasing school quality and family choice through mechanisms like publicly-funded vouchers or tuition tax credits. Proponents of those reforms argue that a competitive market approach to the provision of schooling will increase school quality--or at least parental satisfaction with their children's schools--and improve the efficiency of public spending on education. Their arguments are directed at the perceived shortcomings of public school systems and are built on assumptions about how the introduction of private market mechanisms will overcome these problems.

The public schools have evolved to their current form to accommodate a variety of forces: legislative desire for financial accountability, state interest in prescribing minimal equity and quality standards, interest group pressures, and more. The forces have shaped a school system which serves public and personal interests through a bureaucratic--somewhat centralized, somewhat uniform--apparatus. It is naive to believe that the forces which have shaped

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American education will disappear with the introduction of vouchers. Indeed, some underlying pressures will be exacerbated by vouchers. Hence, we must anticipate that these forces will give rise to legislation, regulation, and bureaucratization intended by the political system to control education. The unknown factor is the extent to which market accountability will substitute for bureaucratic accountability in the political system. Against this unknown factor must be arrayed another unknown. How much more (or less) will the political system regulate private providers than it has its publicly-elected providers?

INTRODUCTION

The last decade of public discourse about public education has revolved around concerns that educational quality is declining, that bureaucratization is reducing school responsiveness, and that school managers are not sufficiently accountable for fiscal and programmatic decisions. The public schools, many think, have become ineffective and inefficient deliverers of educational services. Proposed solutions to the perceived problems of public education range from state- and federally-enacted accountability plans to deregulation efforts to vouchers and tuition tax credits. Each of these proposals is based upon a different theory of how effectiveness and efficiency can best be achieved, and each emphasizes the attainment of different goals for the educational system.

We have argued elsewhere[1] that certain policies intended to increase school system effectiveness through bureaucratic accountability schemes have instead created inefficient, dysfunctional consequences because they are based on inaccurate conceptions of the educational process and the ways in which school organizations operate. In this paper, we examine whether an alternative scheme--vouchers--can solve the effectiveness and efficiency problems of the educational system through the mechanism of market accountability.

In order to discuss effectiveness and efficiency in a meaningful way, it is necessary to place them in the context of goal attainment; that is, we need to examine the effective and efficient accomplishment of some desired objective(s). Thus, we treat these concepts as

adjectives rather than nouns, as descriptive of means rather than of ends. We use effective to mean the degree to which a desired result is achieved, and efficient to mean the degree to which the result is achieved without waste or excess cost. We approach the problem by examining, first, how public schooling has evolved to meet societal goals and how it has responded to competing public concerns. We then turn our attention to the proposals and responses of voucher advocates, evaluating them in the light of the forces that have shaped public education in this country.

THE GOALS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public schools have been created primarily to meet the state's need for an educated citizenry. Those on both sides of the voucher issue agree that "the reason that so much of our social resources are devoted to education is that the reproduction of our social, economic, and political system depends heavily on preparing the young to understand and participate in that system."[2] State goals include:

- Socialization to a common culture (education to meet social needs);
- Inculcation of basic democratic values and preparation of students to responsibly exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities (education to meet political needs); and
- Preparation of students for further education, training, and occupational life (education to meet economic needs).

The common public school has evolved as the presumably most efficient means to achieve state goals. Because the public school is embedded in an egalitarian legal system, equality of educational opportunity is an additional, important value that has helped to shape the common school. Equality is both an outcome goal for the public school system in its role as the great equalizer for society-at-large and a process goal of the system in its approach to all of its other objectives.

Yet individual consumer (parent or student) goals often diverge from state goals. Individuals have different social, economic, and political goals, and very often disagree on how to pursue even the commonly-held goals. The tension between state goals and individual goals is addressed, if not resolved, by allowing some choice in the common school system. Local control of schools, in some locations, gives like-minded parents the opportunity to influence the schools. State, federal, and judicial action provide other means for individuals to influence the schools. Those unhappy with the public schools can (at their own expense) choose to send their children to private schools. Within the public schools, alternative curricula and "attention to individual differences" provide some diversity.

Nonetheless, many critics have argued that the pursuit of efficiency and equality in the attainment of state goals has driven the public schools toward centralization, standardization, and bureaucratization.[3] These developments have led to the view that public school quality is declining and that the modest choice in the system is being smothered. Because governmental efforts to regulate

school quality must be implemented through bureaucratic means, the drive toward efficiency may bear the seeds of its own destruction.

Critics of these developments have proposed reforms intended to promote greater efficiency and choice. With respect to the inefficiencies resulting from centralization, they have proposed decentralization, debureaucratization, and community control. With respect to the lack of choice, they have proposed alternative schools. Whether any of these reforms has been adequately tested is an open question. Yet none has captured the amount of attention as has the idea of educational vouchers.

Proponents argue that vouchers will increase choice and efficiency by promoting competition among public and private schools. Their claims must be assessed by evaluating the extent to which state and individual goals are likely to be achieved in a voucher system. What also remains to be demonstrated is whether schools which afford choice can be both efficient and equitable, individually and collectively. The public now pays for and provides education for most children. Bureaucratic accountability is the means by which the public knows whether the schools are achieving the state's goals efficiently and equitably. Consumers decide whether the schools (public and private) are achieving individual consumers' objectives. Under vouchers the public would be paying for most of the cost of education for all children and providing a large share of it. Consumers can, of course, continue to decide whether the schools are achieving their personal objectives. What mechanism will the public have for knowing whether the schools are achieving the state's goals efficiently and

equitably? The answer to this question is complex. We try to answer this question as a way of judging the feasibility and desirability of educational vouchers.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

At the heart of the voucher debate is the question of where authority should rest for making decisions about individual children's education. The fundamental differences of opinion that exist about the relationship between state authority and education reflect competing notions of democracy itself,[4] as well as the role of education in a democratic society. The evolution of public education provides a baseline for assessing the contrapuntal perspective of current voucher advocates.

We should begin by asking a basic question: Why don't we leave education completely in the hands of parents? We do not leave education in the hands of parents because parents are unequally able to prepare their children for their social, economic, and political roles as citizens in our society, and because a common view of the requirements of full citizenship seems best served through a common educational system. We began to provide free public education in this country to compensate for the fact that families had different abilities to bring education to their children. Publicly-funded schools were first established to provide education to the very poor; other parents banded together to establish local schools or sent their children to private institutions. The provision of education was at best uneven and, at worst, totally haphazard. Subsequently, however, we established states and in the process wrote

state constitutions. State constitutions generally require the state to establish and maintain a system of free public schools. State laws compel attendance at these schools. For its own benefit, the state insists upon the education of its citizenry. States have delegated responsibility for the operation of schools to local school boards. However, because different communities are unequally able or willing to provide education, the states have regulated the quantity and quality of education available to students. Over the years states began to develop standards to force local communities to provide education of a certain quality; they mandated the curriculum. In some instances, they mandated minimum qualifications for teachers; they mandated minimum per pupil expenditures; and now they even mandate minimum outcomes.

Students (or their families) are constrained in their legal ability to reject the state's largesse. They may send their children to private schools at their own expense, though these schools must meet certain minimum state requirements. Under very limited circumstances, the state may permit parents to educate their own children. In short, the state has demonstrated a strong interest in controlling the quantity and quality of a student's education. Education is much less a right--which the student or his family may claim or reject--so much as an obligation which the state compels.

Throughout our history, we have had conflicting views of education. One view has tended to be more dominant than the others. The framers of the state constitutions argued for the need for public education in order to produce an educated citizenry, in order to

properly socialize children. Their interest was less a concern for the individual than a concern for the society. A somewhat different view of education is that it must be provided to the individual so that he can become a proper citizen, prepared to exercise intelligently the rights of citizenship in a democratic society. A radically different view is that education is a private good, primarily for the betterment of the individual. In this view, maximizing individual welfare will maximize the welfare of society. This view is reflected in voucher proponents Coons' and Sugarman's initial assumption that "society's sole objective in education is the best interest of the individual child. . . ."[5]

These differing views have been with us for a long time and they remain with us.[6] At base, they encompass different views of the primacy of pluralist and individual rights in a democracy. Sometimes we focus more on one and sometimes more on the other. In the main, we have tended to focus more on a pluralist conception of democracy. We have rationalized public support for education on the basis that it is necessary for the betterment of society rather than for the betterment of the individual. We have governed publicly-supported education through the pluralist political process for the same reason.

Looking back to the early part of this century we can see the manifestation of these competing notions of education. Public education, especially in our largest cities, was built up by industrialists anxious to socialize the immigrants who were then coming to our largest cities, to socialize them so that they could take their place in the industrial machine that America was becoming. The prevailing view that education was necessary to socialize people to take their

places in the industrial machine gave way, for a little while, in the twenties and thirties, to what came to be known as the Progressive era in American education. There we developed a somewhat different view under the intellectual leadership of John Dewey and others. The idea was that democracy rested on the education of the individual child, that it was the purpose of education to develop the individual's potential, so that he could not only accept his place in society--not only take his place in the industrial machine, if you will--but also be prepared to challenge society when he judged that it was necessary to do so. The Progressives aimed to make public schools more attentive to the differential needs of individual students and to the development of individual autonomy through schooling. The 1920s also saw the articulation of private rights to free choice in education in the Supreme Court's decision in Pierce v. Society of Sisters affirming the rights of parents to send their children to private schools.

As World War II began, Progressive views receded in importance. Education became part of the machinery necessary to prepare us to cope with the problems brought by World War II. After the War, we continued to hold the view of education as necessary for social and economic betterment. The view was dramatically reinforced in the late fifties when the Russians launched Sputnik. That event catalyzed latent sentiments and induced us as a nation to enact the National Defense Education Act. That Act contained a number of features which strengthened many aspects of the education system at the elementary and secondary as well as the higher education levels, but the rationale was preparation for national defense. That law, and its

view of education, lasted until the mid-sixties when a new national problem came to the fore. That, of course, was the problem of unequal opportunity; realization of the problem culminated in the War on Poverty and, with it, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. There we began, for a short time, to have a slightly different view of education--we tended to view it as being important for individual betterment. We tended to speak of equal opportunity for individuals. We tended to speak of education as an opportunity and a right which was to be made available to all students so that they could develop their own talents. At the same time, however, the concept of equal educational opportunity, advanced in court decisions like Brown v. Board of Education, Serrano v. Priest, and Lau v. Nichols, has enlarged the freedom of relatively powerless groups of citizens by limiting individual rights of private association. As Thomas James observes:

> These decisions have attempted to break down separate spheres of interest in order to guarantee equal protection. They rationalize individual entitlements in relation to a whole in which citizens are theoretically equal, rather than in relation to existing forms of association in which resources are distributed unequally. Most important, they assert the primacy of collective authority over individual interest in deciding how children will be socialized in the institutions of elementary and secondary education that are under public control.[7]

The formulation and enforcement of equal protection laws have been based on a pluralist view of democracy, in which the state has an obligation to distribute its resources and services equally, and these resources are defined quite broadly. This conception guarantees greater collective rights by effectively limiting private rights of association,

authority, and exclusion on the part of both individuals and institutions.[8] It requires that public (and, to a lesser degree, private) institutions be governed by elected officials responsible to the broader populace in accordance with collective notions of what is in the best interests of the state as well as of the individual child. The size of the collective group to which schools are held accountable has progressively grown over the past two centuries, with the emergence of state and then federal interests in the conduct of education. The process of national political integration that has occurred in America as well as other nation-states has enlarged the basic constituency with which educational systems are in exchange.[9] The increasing influence of more inclusive authorities has tended to decrease the amount of influence which the individual parent has over his child's education. In fact, it might be argued that each widening of the sphere of authority was intended to do just that.

Governance Structures

Coons and Sugarman argue an elegant case for family control over educational decisions. They contend that the student's family is the agency best equipped to watch out for the student's educational welfare. The state, they argue, is less likely to maximize the student's welfare. The history of schooling in America reveals that school governance has operated on a radically different premise. The evolution of school governance structures has progressively driven wider wedges between the family and the student. In order to predict the consequence of vouchers, we must examine this development and its causes.

Part of the story is poignantly told by David Tyack in The One Best System. During the nineteenth century, there arose the belief among reformers that there was but "one best system" of education. This system was developed by reference to the then-existing deficiencies of local education,

with centralizing reforms addressed at the most egregious results of an arrangement that lacked standards of educational practice and mechanisms of accountability. The system began the process of preventing the exercise of discretion by parents in behalf of their children's education:

> Community control of schools became anathema to many of the educational reformers of 1900, like other familiar features of the country school: nongraded primary education, instruction of younger children by older, flexible scheduling, and a lack of bureaucratic buffers between teacher and patrons. As advocates of consolidation, bureaucratization, and professionalization of rural education, school leaders in the twentieth century have given the one-room school a bad press, and not without reason. Some farmers were willing to have their children spend their school-days in buildings not fit for cattle. In all too many neighborhoods it was only ne'er-do-wells or ignoramuses who would teach for a pittance under the eye and thumb of the community. Children suffered blisters from slab seats and welts from birch rods, sweltered near the pot-bellied stove or froze in the drafty corners. And the meagerness of formal schooling in rural areas seriously handicapped youth who migrated to a complex urban-industrial society.10

The search for the one best system was further fueled both by the belief in the need to socialize all to the dominant Anglo-American culture and by the egalitarian movement that began to take hold during the era of industrialization. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the idea of privately financed education for the upper classes (with publicly financed education for paupers) gave way to the idea of the common school for all. If America were to become an efficient industrialized nation, then the masses would need to be educated. If America was not to be a collectivity of diverse ethnic and language groups, then a common school experience would need to be provided for all. The common public school for students of all social classes and ethnic groups became the dominant model. The same education for all in integrated settings became the principle (though not yet extended to most racial minorities or to handicapped children).

In the course of pursuing one best and more inclusive system, the professionals began to assume control. Their remedies included consolidation of schools, transportation of students, expert supervision by superintendents, "taking the schools out of politics," and professional training for teachers. The techniques which the professionals used were adopted from the technology and forms of organization which they saw emerging in industry:

> They sought to replace confused and erratic means of control with careful allocation of powers and functions within hierarchical organizations; to establish networks of communication that would convey information and directives and would provide data for planning for the future; to substitute impersonal rules for informal, individual adjudication of disputes; to regularize procedures so that they would apply uniformly to all in certain categories; and to set objective standards for admission to and performance in each role, whether superintendent or third-grader. Efficiency, rationality, continuity, precision, impartiality became watchwords of the consolidators. In short, they tried to create a more bureaucratic system.[11]

While most of the construction of the one best system took place at the grass-roots level, critical steps were taken by state legislatures, which enacted policies designed to divorce schooling from the local political process and to place its control in the hands of professionals. These "progressive experts" concluded that:

> 'No one can deny that under existing conditions the very salvation of our cities depends upon the ability of legislatures to enact such provisions as will safeguard the rights of citizens, take the government from ignorant and irresponsible politicians, and place it in the hands of honest and competent experts.' Like Draper, they disdained the electorate of the great cities; like him, they wondered if it might not be possible to 'safeguard the rights of citizens' by disenfranchising or at least weakening the power of the wrong sort of people by means of state action. They shared this distrust of the democratic process with a number of patrician reformers and conservative social scientists who urged reforms to take not only the schools but urban government itself out of politics.[12]

"Protection of citizens' rights" meant a weakening of community control over education. The actions by state legislatures continued the severance of family control over educational decisions.

In general, throughout the twentieth century, the progressive bureaucratization of schooling has continued. Local school systems have become increasingly subject to direction from state school boards and state legislatures. Beginning in 1954, the courts have exerted a major influence over local school decisions. Beginning in 1965, the federal government also became a major influence over local school decisions. And in the late 1960s, state legislatures stepped up their efforts to influence local school decisions. Each of these developments was caused by public desires for more equal treatment and more accountability in the public schools. However, with each of these major steps, school decisionmaking has become more rationalized, regulated, and proceduralized.[13]

School governance changes over the past century have been driven primarily by the principle of inclusiveness, both with respect to including more children in the common school experience and with respect to including larger segments of the polity in the jurisdictions responsible for making educational policy. Beginning with groups of families, we now include state and federal "communities" of interest in various decisions affecting local schools. Thus, a greater variety of pupils are served in the public schools, and a greater variety of pluralist interests are represented in the fashioning of policies affecting any individual child, school, or school district. These interests often represent a wider range of concerns and/or educational tastes than are present in the local school or school district community itself.

What emerges is a tension that Thomas Green refers to as the dialectic between the "best" principle and the "equal" principle. The "best principle" is the proposition that each student is entitled to the education that is best for him; the "equal principle" is the proposition that each is entitled to receive an education at least as good as (equal to) that provided for others.[14] The "best principle" typically operates through the political system where group interests generate client definitions of needs that will be accommodated if political accountability mechanisms operate effectively. Minority points of view suffer unless sufficient public consensus about certain needs can be achieved. The "equal principle" is seen at work in the legal system where individual rights to equal treatment are translated into state duties which must be performed collectively. These rights are enforced by state agencies responsibile for implementing regularized policies or by individuals who seek recourse to legal accountability mechanisms. The satisfaction of the "equal" principle requires formal accountability mechanisms that include objective standards of equality that are uniformly applied, leaving less room in the system for individual decisions about what is "best" in particular cases. The state must resolve the dialectic between "best" and "equal" through formal systems or processes that consider the needs and rights of groups of children. Voucher proposals pose the prospect of resolving the dialectic primarily through personal interchange between parents and schools with respect to what is best for the child.

Finance Structure

As already noted, public education in America has entertained (often simultaneously) two views of the relation of society, school, and

student. In the first view, education is an obligation which society imposes on the student for its benefit. Educational finance then is concerned with the adequacy of resources available to the school to educate the student to the level which society demands. Through the first half of the twentieth century, this view of education has dominated. Under this justification, states provided aid to local school districts which did not have sufficient resources to provide the "minimum foundation program." Sometimes such state aid was also justified as increasing equal educational opportunity. However, to speak of an "equal opportunity" to be subjected to a state-imposed obligation is to stretch the usual meaning of opportunity.

A second view of the relation of society, school, and the student began to come into focus at mid-century. That view is that education has some of the characteristics of a "right"--a right which society makes available to the student through schooling. The view received its still most famous encapsulation in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954:

> [The opportunity of an education], where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

Under this dual conception of the relation of society, school, and student, two versions of a question remain. How much must the state invest in each student to achieve its objectives? To what quantity of educational resources is the student entitled? The question, in both its forms, is the subject of continuing litigation and legislation.

The New Jersey Supreme Court, embracing in large part the first conception of the relationship between society, school, and student, has said that the state must provide sufficient resources to purchase

> . . . that educational opportunity which is needed in the contemporary setting to equip a child for his role as a citizen and as a competitor in the labor market.

This edict does not require equal access to the state's resources or equal educational spending. Rather, it requires that school districts and the state engage in a goal-setting and assessment process that will evaluate the "adequacy" of the education each student receives. On the other hand, the California Supreme Court has ordered that every student is entitled to nearly the same level of resources: equal per pupil expenditures (within a $100 range) apart from categorical special needs aid. This approach is more clearly directed at the provision of equal educational opportunity.

The federal government has adopted a more categorical approach. Federal involvement in educational finance has been justified primarily with reference to social needs that can be met by schools. The Vocational Education Act and the National Defense Education Act were enacted to ensure a well-trained work force to serve the nation's economic--and, in the latter case, political--needs. The social benefits of education to which the federal government has paid attention in recent years are also viewed as individual benefits, though not necessarily rights. Federal efforts to ensure equal educational opportunity are meant to realize a basic tenet of democratic society--equal treatment--as well as "to create and sustain a system of social mobility in which a child's income and occupational status are not linked inextricably to those of his parent."[15] These efforts encompass both nondiscrimination and compensatory approaches that are justified by the social, political, and economic benefits accruing to the state, as well as the individual benefits accruing to the students who would be unfairly treated or less well-served in their absence.

The implicit view of the relation of society, school, and student in federal legislation is not always clear. For example, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides compensatory education to some educationally disadvantaged children who come from low-income families. Access to these additional resources and services is protected by equal treatment rules, but receipt of services is not an absolute entitlement. The more recent Education for All Handicapped Children Act explicitly treats education as a right. The purpose of the Act is to ". . . assure that all handicapped children have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education." All handicapped children have an absolute right to an appropriate education. It is interesting to note that, by federal law, all handicapped children--poor and rich--have this unqualified right. The educationally disadvantaged--poor, and certainly not rich--do not. Nonhandicapped children have only a conditional right to an education.

The Handicapped Education Law comes closer to the individualistic conception of educational decisionmaking encompassed by voucher proposals, both by declaring education to be an individual right and by placing a greater amount of authority for influencing educational placements and decisions in the hands of parents. In a very limited sense, federal and state aid for handicapped children is like a voucher that may be spent in public or private educational institutions depending on which can provide the most appropriate education for the child. Expenditures and placements are less influenced by pluralist decisionmaking processes, though they are subject to the judgments of school district personnel, state officials, and judges as well as parents. What may prove instructive about the relatively unique approach to providing education for handicapped children is the degree to which greater choice in the system in the

best interests of the child has led to increased regulation of public and private institutions charged with serving those interests.

The evolution of public school finance in this country has followed a somewhat uneven path toward greater equality of educational resources for each child and toward a conception of education as an individual right. However, neither of these characterizations is fully accurate in describing the public school system. In the first instance, this is because tensions still exist between notions of children's rights to equal educational opportunity and notions of parent's and/or local community's "rights" to decide how much to spend on the education of their children. In the second instance, there is not now, nor likely to be, a consensus on the issue of whose interests are paramount in the provision of education, who should decide how these interests--whatever they may be--are best served, and how we will know that the schools are succeeding. Just as these questions continually confront policymakers concerned with public education, they will confront policymakers charged with shaping and implementing voucher plans. Indeed, the various voucher plans that have been proposed treat these questions quite differently.

VOUCHER PROPOSALS

At the core of voucher proponents' arguments is the notion that state efforts to serve the best interests of the child are not efficient or effective because they stifle diversity and constrain parent choice. State actions have these effects because they create centralized, bureaucratic channels for implementing uniform policies affecting groups of children. The individual needs and educational tastes of children and their families cannot be fully satisfied by the public mechanisms for determining and

implementing educational programs for masses of children. Moreoever, they argue, in the current system only the very rich have freedom of choice in education. Vouchers would extend this freedom to the poor as well.

Voucher advocates assume a set of consequences that will follow the institution of vouchers. Since there has been no true test of vouchers, we are left to examine the advocates' predictions in the light of historical and contemporary knowledge about schooling in America. In this exercise, it is important to recognize that voucher plans are not identical. Some plans contemplate larger vouchers for the poor than for the wealthy, no supplementation by parents or others, an extensive (and expensive) information system, and regulation of admissions to ensure social heterogeneity in schools. Other plans contemplate a modest information system, the option of parental and other (e.g., church) supplementation and laissez-faire admissions policies. Obviously, these features will lead to different consequences.

One fundamental outcome assumed by voucher advocates is that under any voucher plan the state will have less control over education and, conversely, parents will have more choice over the type of education their children will receive. An extension of this reasoning leads to another presumed outcome--that the education received will serve the best interests of the child. Below we examine these assumptions, along with the assertion that a voucher system will lead to more efficient and effective delivery of educational services. We explore the questions of efficiency and effectiveness with respect to the four previously outlined goals of education held to be important for the state and a fifth goal important to individual consumers:

(1) Socialization to a common culture;

(2) Inculcation of democratic values and preparation for exercising the full rights of citizenship;

(3) Preparation of students for further education, training, and occupational life;

(4) Equal opportunity; and

(5) Provision of education in the best interests of the child.

The degree to which each of these goals is attainable by the workings of the marketplace will greatly influence the extent to which state control over education may be relinquished.

Socialization and Preparation for Citizenship

We consider the goals of socialization and preparation for citizenship jointly because they are often viewed as closely linked. As Levin notes:

> A major function of the public schools is the transmission of a common language, heritage, set of values, and knowledge that are necessary for appropriate political functioning in our democratic society.[16]

The common curriculum and a (not always realized) commitment to heterogeneity of student populations are efforts of the public schools to meet these goals. Clearly, the marketplace freely operating will not produce either common teachings or heterogeneity in those who are taught. The primary appeal of vouchers is that they would allow those whose philosophical, pedagogical, political, or religious views differ to band together in schools that satisfy their tastes along any of these dimensions.

But a common educational experience is not, in the minds of some voucher proponents, necessarily linked to the ability of students to later function in a democratic society. Coons and Sugarman argue that the public schools, because they aim to socialize children in a particular way, can never be neutral and, therefore, deprive the student of opportunities to develop autonomy, a desirable equality in democratic citizens. Family choice schools would foster autonomy, they say, because "there may be a linkage between tribal ways and the path to independent moral judgment. . . . Even where particular values seem narrow and one-sided, a child's engagement with them at a crucial stage in his development might secure his allegiance to that ideal of human reciprocity which is indispensable to our view of autonomy."[17]

Thus, they dispense with the goal of socialization to a common culture by arguing its irrelevance to preparation for democratic life. There seems little dispute that an unregulated voucher scheme would be an ineffective and inefficient means for socializing children to a common culture and set of values. Were there sufficient public concern about this likely consequence, regulations prescribing certain common subject matter or course content would certainly emerge. Many states already regulate private schools in this manner for this reason, although requirements are generally minimal.[18] Whether state restraint in this regard is because the spending of state funds is not at stake is a question which we treat later.

One may argue that the socialization functions of schooling are among the oppressive, essentially undemocratic mechanisms of the corporate state that Americans are ready to cast aside--or at least they should be.[19] That argument, whatever its validity, does not allow us to

dispense so easily with the question of what education will best prepare students for full political participation in the society. To Coons' and Sugarman's not ineluctable argument for autonomy[20] we may counterpose Levin's argument for tolerance as a precondition to political competence. Levin observes that the tolerance toward dissenting viewpoints that is necessary "for a democracy in which controversial issues must be addressed and resolved continually" emerges from opportunities for exposure to constructive conflict and controversy.[21] Such exposure seems unlikely in a system where parents choose schools that reinforce their own views.

We cannot here resolve the questions of whether autonomy or tolerance is more important for political preparation or empowerment, whether the two are related to each other, or whether either is more or less likely in a world of family choice schools. We can, however, move beyond the issue of what values are explicitly taught or addressed in schools--and what their effects may be--to the issue of what student grouping receives the teaching. As James notes:

> The latter [issue] involves deciding what is the most legitimate criterion by which to organize children for learning basic skills and for entering the economy, the democratic polity, and adult society. . . . Our rules for bringing students together in schools are a political matter that precedes pedagogy and policy. . . . Schools teach some of the most deep-seated and lasting lessons of social life by the ways in which they bring children together, regardless of what is taught in the classroom. It could hardly be otherwise, since patterns of inclusion reflect quite accurately the school's relation to community and society. . . . This is true because it is through direct experience that children learn about the conventional rules of human association in their society. . . . Whatever else children learn in school, they learn about democracy as the word is to be understood <u>where they live.</u>[22]

If we accept that there is a relationship between demonstrated inclusiveness and democratic understanding, we must conclude that where bureaucratic efforts to stem exclusion have only partially succeeded at providing children with an experience of inclusive democracy, market mechanisms are sure to fail. The decades of controversy over segregation along lines of social class, ethnicity, ability, gender, and physical/mental health will not evaporate with the introduction of family choice. Some families' choices will then, as now, result in the exclusion of others, only no recourse will exist for those excluded unless the market is regulated. The question is not only one of equal access--which we treat more fully below--but of the state's interest in encouraging those who would not prefer to be grouped together to nonetheless share a collective association. Even with substantial regulation of financial supplementation and access, it is unlikely that vouchers would prove a more efficient or effective means of promoting a democratic understanding based on inclusiveness than do publicly-governed means for associating children. In fact, to the extent that regulation of vouchers seeks to counteract preferences for private association, the very foundation of the voucher concept is weakened.

Preparation for Further Education, Training, and Occupational Life

The preceding criteria for evaluating vouchers are based on a view of education as primarily a public good. If we meet voucher proponents on their own ground, we must also give considerable weight to the private benefits of education. Although academic preparation serves both public and private needs, it is far easier justified as a benefit to the individual than are the social and political objectives discussed above.

One of the generally offered rationales for vouchers is that the competition they will induce will lead to greater educational quality. There are several possible definitions for this imprecise term:

(1) The quantity of educational resources available in a school;

(2) The educational processes which are employed in a school;

(3) The extent to which education results in the attainment of specified outcomes or competencies;

(4) The extent to which education results in the development of those aspects of a student's potential desired by the student or his/her family.

Some voucher proponents would leave all of these elements of quality to the marketplace, relying on family choice to support the better schools and to eliminate the less desirable ones. The eventual emergence of better quality, in this view, depends on a closeness between producers and consumers so that preferences can be translated into services, the existence of the "perfect information" system that economists are so fond of assuming, equal access to good quality schools (however defined), and a consonance among public wants, public needs, and available products.[23] Pacheco argues that

> [I]t is a fundamental mistake to equate the presence of alternatives with either higher quality or what the public wants. It may be a serious mistake to equate public wants with public needs. All that might be guaranteed by a voucher scheme is that some sort of educational options would exist, not necessarily those that families want or need. Like commercial TV, the public may be faced with a plethora of 'alternatives,' none of which are particularly good or attractive.[24]

In the worst case scenario, unregulated vouchers could result in at least certain classes of parents not being able to secure the quality of education they want for their children. This would be true under the various definitions of quality if the entire voucher system were to be underfunded by the state, if parents did not have adequate information to make sound decisions about school options, if the marketplace did not produce desired educational options in all neighborhoods, or if the educational resources, processes, or philosophies selected by parents were not to result in the learning outcomes they desire. Furthermore, if tuition and admissions policies are unregulated, low-income parents and those parents of children with whatever the excluded characteristics might be from schools practicing selective admissions (ability, gender, ethnicity, language dominance, etc.) would have fewer opportunities to choose the quality of education they want for their children. To avoid any one of these potentially undesirable consequences, the state would have to become involved in policies about the state financing and private supplementation of vouchers, the extent and accuracy of the information system for parents, the location of educational alternatives of various types, the technology of education, and/or the admissions policies of schools.

The Alum Rock voucher experiment illustrates how some of these potential problems might occur. First, the single most important determinant of parents' school choices was proximity to the home, even when free transportation was provided. Thus, to the extent that schools of different kinds cluster in different kinds of neighborhoods, access to similar quality school experiences may be constrained by geography. Furthermore, after four years of extensive bilingual publicity about the voucher program in Alum Rock, a quarter of the parents did not even know it existed;

a much larger proportion did not have accurate information about the voucher program or the specific schools. Parents of low-income and lower educational attainment were less well-informed than other parents. Finally, parents' program choices resulted in clusterings of students by family background factors like income, education, attitudes, and childrearing values.[25] These effects would likely be exacerbated by tuition differentials and selective admissions.

While there are reasons to expect that a voucher system might result in children receiving unequal quality in education, these effects might be offset by regulatory efforts to ensure adequate information, equal access to existing institutions, adequate funding, and perhaps even incentives for "high quality" schools (defined by whatever standard) to locate in neighborhoods where choice options are limited. Of course, such regulations would constrain the market in some ways in order to open it up in others.

The question still remaining is whether market accountability will serve to satisfy public needs to know whether children are being adequately prepared for further education, training, and occupational life. Will parents know when adequate preparation is being offered? Will they have options when they are dissatisfied? Will their individual decisions taken collectively satisfy the state's needs for an educated citizenry? It is extremely likely that the state will want to exercise some control over this aspect of accountability. Many states already require that private schools meet some of the course requirements of the public school system. In addition, a large number of states have enacted minimum competency tests to ensure that public school students are adequately prepared. The notion that these tests or other standardized achievement

tests might be used to measure the quality of private (as well as public) schools has been advanced by some voucher advocates and others concerned with preventing state regulation of the curricula of private schools.[26] Such outcome measures, they reason, might serve as a substitute for other, more intrusive, accountability measures.

There are, of course, many potential problems with this solution to the problem of knowing whether voucher schools are effective. First, the more difficult and extensive the tests are, the more likely they are to drive the curriculum in all schools. To the extent that they homogenize curricula and, perhaps, even teaching methods, they undermine the diversity that vouchers are meant to offer. If the tests are minimal, on the other hand, they will not be very informative to those who want to know how effective the schools are. There is the additional possibility, of course, that such tests are not the best indicators of the quality of education, or that they even undermine the pursuit of other educational goals.

There is another problem with the use of test scores as a substitute for other measures of school quality. If people accept such a measure as an accurate indicator of what the <u>school</u> does, the perceptions of school quality as an extension of student body composition that have hampered integration efforts along all the dimensions discussed earlier would be strengthened. The segregative effects of such perceptions would be exacerbated. Schools that serve low-achieving students would be viewed as inadequate institutions. Institutions would have little incentive to locate in neighborhoods where students have been ill-served in the past, or to accept such students as part of the student body.

Public perceptions of schooling have been confused enough already by many people's failure to understand that 50 percent of all students will always fall below the norm on standardized tests of pupil achievement, regardless of the absolute levels of knowledge possessed by the pupil population. If schools are put under greater pressure to show students achieving at or above "the norm," what will happen to access for those 50 percent of the children whose educational experience is supposed to be especially enriched by vouchers? If an attempt to offset this pressure required all schools to accept similar proportions of high- and low-achieving students, certain kinds of highly selective schools would have to drop out of the voucher system altogether, and others would face awesome recruitment tasks.

The alternatives that exist require either regulation of voucher schools in the ways we've mentioned or faith that parents will have adequate information to choose wisely, adequate options to choose from, and that their decisions will somehow converge with the state's definition of an adequately educated citizenry. At the nexus of the argument for vouchers, though, is the concept that the parents' choice of an education serving the best interests of the child need not converge with state goals. There is also a nebulous quality to the concept of equal opportunity incorporated into voucher schemes. Can the parents' view of the best interests of each child be served while equal opportunity is also ensured? Below we examine how the dialectic between the "best" and "equal" principles might be framed under vouchers.

Equal Opportunity and Best Interests of the Child

There are two major ways in which the "best" and "equal" principles might collide under vouchers. One is if a parent's definition of what is

best for his or her child encompasses an educational setting that, by its nature, must exclude some other children. The other is if a parent's definition of what is best for his or her child limits the child's own opportunities according to some other, possibly valid, definition. The first instance where the dialectic comes into play poses questions of equal access. The second poses the more fundamental question of who knows what serves the best interests of the child.

The question of equal access is addressed in part in the preceding section. It might be resolved in part by providing equal vouchers with no private supplementation (or vouchers scaled to financial or educational need), requiring an extensive information system, providing free transportation, and requiring nondiscriminatory admissions. However, no voucher scheme envisions totally open admissions or equal educational opportunity as it has come to be defined in the public sphere. To require exclusive preparatory schools to admit any student, for example, would contravene the notions of institutional diversity and rights of private association that undergird voucher conceptions. Furthermore, to require all voucher schools to provide services to the handicapped or to limited English-speaking students--in the way that courts have defined programmatic equal access--would divert many schools from what they see as their institutional mission and would visit upon the private sector much of the regulation that some feel has impaired the efficiency of the public sector.

Voucher proponents would leave the task of educating students who don't fit in elsewhere to the public schools or to new voucher schools that might emerge to fill their particular needs. Given the fact that combined public and private services in lower-income neighborhoods have been found over and over again to be both quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate,[27]

we find it difficult to swallow the assumption that equal opportunity will be better served by the marketplace than it has been (however haltingly) served by public efforts. Were a voucher scheme to emerge with a provision that guaranteed access to the capital needed to start schools where they prove to be needed, we might choke a little less on the equal opportunity assumption. We would still, however, have to grapple with the substantive aspects of equal opportunity that touch upon different notions of the best interests of the child.

Arguing that parents may not always choose education that serves the best interests of their children has a paternalistic ring to it that is uncomfortable. Nonetheless we advance this argument because it is not entirely clear that the appeal of family choice is grounded in a completely realistic view of families or of the social good. The family choice approach is based upon three assumptions: (1) that parents always have the best interests of their children at the forefront of their concerns; (2) that parents know what type of education will serve those interests; and (3) that parents have the information and access necessary for them to select the education they seek.

We do believe that most parents seek what is best for their children. The relationship between parents and children is a special one that has long received state protection. However, it would be dishonest not to also acknowledge that many children--indeed an increasing number--are subject to neglect and abuse at the hands of their parents. Child abuse, youth suicide, runaways, and youth homicide are serious problems that exist in families and that have dramatically increased over the past two decades.[28] These are, of course, the most egregious examples of alienation between children and their parents. In some other families, children are cherished and their needs are well-attended to. In still

others, children are loved, or at least tolerated, but a variety of other concerns take precedence over attention to their needs. The point is that reliance on the family as the single best entity for pursuing the child's welfare is as dangerously one-sided as relying solely on public institutions or officers to be caring and knowledgeable about what the child needs.

The degree to which parents know what is best for their children is an even more problematic question. Coons and Sugarman avoid the insoluable philosophical issue of what constitutes "the good" by reference to a principle of subsidiarity--that better decisionmaking happens closest to the pertinent party because knowledge and personal investment are greatest there. Whatever the decision, it is bound to be better when it is made by those directly affected by it. (This reasoning of course does not address the social purposes of education, and we put those purposes aside here having discussed them earlier.) If we accept this principle, we must be prepared to accept that the child's best interests are served if, for example, the parent sees the child's potential as being less than what others would recognize, and chooses a school accordingly. If parents' choices of schools reinforce social class stratification and socialization,[29] we must accept the outcomes as justified by choice and as in the child's best interests.

If parents' knowledge of their children does not translate into knowledge of what education they want (or need), we must be prepared to allow the marketplace and the shopping process to solve the riddle. We must either be prepared to assume that parents have the pedagogical knowledge to look for what they want and know when they have found it, or we must be prepared to regulate schools in some fashion to ensure that they deliver

the services parents say they want. If this were a trivial issue, we would not in recent years have seen parents and policymakers enact minimum competency testing laws and other accountability measures to find out if schools were doing what at least some parents want them to do.

Finally, if we can assume that some means for translating professional knowledge to parents can be devised, we must return once again to the question of whether parents will be empowered by enough information about school choices and by access to schools of their choice to act on decisions they have made. Will parents' well-informed choices in the best interests of their children be met by a responsive, honest, informative, and equally accessible marketplace? Is a voucher sufficient empowerment absent other forms of accountability? Without many of the safeguards we have discussed, we would have to say "probably not." While some diversity would undoubtedly be encouraged by vouchers, with benefits for many children and parents, those who are ill-informed, who are unwilling or unable to "shop around," or who are barred by geography or personal characteristics from the schools they would otherwise choose will not reap the benefits of the new marketplace.

This outcome might seem little different from what many parents and children experience in the current largely-public educational system. And, in fact, the degree to which many public schools seem ineffective and unresponsive to many children might suggest that if some children benefit from vouchers, those who remain ill-served will at least be a smaller portion of children than is now the case. The fundamental trade-off is that with vouchers we would buy, on faith, more, perhaps better, options for some

while in many ways relinquishing public accountability for all. We would rely on consumerism to ensure quality and equality, and we would forego knowledge of whether state economic, political, and social goals are being well served. To be sure, some voucher plans contain many proposals for overcoming the expected inefficiencies of vouchers at achieving these goals. What is not clear is whether regulating the private marketplace will prove to be more effective and efficient in the long run than deregulating, in some measure, the public system.

In our concluding section, we speculate about how the forces that have shaped public education and the potential marketplace failures we have discussed might shape the regulatory apparatus for a voucher system.

LEGISLATION, REGULATION, AND BUREAUCRACY UNDER VOUCHERS

In popular current parlance, vouchers are intended to deregulate schooling. The rhetoric is to release schools from the progressive and oppressive bureaucratization which has occurred. Yet, at minimum, a set of regulations will be required to specify the financial component of the plan. Regulations concerning the value of the basic voucher and rules concerning public, private, and familial supplementation or non-supplementation will need to exist. A state-level bureaucracy will need to be created to administer the financial component of the plan. Under certain voucher systems, the agency may have to have the capacity to monitor the financial plans of schools, families or other private agencies.

Also at minimum the state is likely to need some capacity for defining a "school." Rules for defining a school will need to be developed; the state may need to be able to monitor schools to determine that they meet the minimum definition of a school. Beyond minimum regulation lie such

areas as personnel and admissions. There may be no personnel qualification requirements (Friedman), existing requirements for private school teachers (the California Initiative) or existing public school teacher requirements (OEO Voucher Plan). There may be no admissions policies (Friedman), non-discrimination policies (California Initiative) or policies favoring integration (OEO Voucher Plan). There may be no curriculum requirements, curricular prescriptions, or curricular proscriptions.

Voucher advocates are likely to understate the quantity of regulation and bureaucracy required to implement a system of vouchers. It is worth noting that the California Initiative required nearly two pages of fine-print additions to the California Constitution. Constitutional provisions and amendments are generally sparely-worded. Less noticed was the change implied in the functioning of the California Department of Education.[30] The Department would need to relate not to 1,040 school districts but to a much larger number of individual schools and the 5,000,000 students who attend them. Many locally-administered functions would need to be handled on a statewide basis. The state would need to classify individual students, track them, monitor their attendance, and adjudicate conflicts between family and school. In short, the state bureaucracy would likely increase in size and in certain responsibilities.

While vouchers might be enacted tabula rasa, it is likely that four forces would increase the quantity of regulations (and attendant bureaucracy) over time. These are (a) financial accountability, (b) state paternalism, (c) interest group pressures, and (d) majority/minority struggles.

Financial Accountability

Under a voucher system, the schools would still be publicly financed, if privately provided. Under the present state/local system for financing and providing public education, state legislatures have shown a remarkable interest in financial and educational accountability. This is so despite the fact that schools are operated under the supervision of local school boards. Perhaps because state legislatures provide state aid or perhaps because they do not trust local school boards, state legislatures have embraced a variety of financial and educational accountability legislation. The legislation has ranged from pure accountability systems to planning-programming-budgeting systems to competency-based education.[31] Under vouchers, the state legislature would still be appropriating funds to be, in effect, administered by local agencies called schools. The situation is analogous to today's situation with one important exception. The element of market accountability has been introduced. To some extent it will substitute for bureaucratic accountability. Yet legislatures will each year have to appropriate a large sum for education. Indeed the sum, if the system operates statewide, will about double the sum now appropriated (since local funding will not exist and private funding will be largely subvented).

Each year the state legislature will have to decide whether it is appropriating the "right amount" for education. As it gropes to determine the answer to this question, it will raise questions about the effectiveness of the educational system, about the adequacy of the last year's appropriation, about equity in the system and so on. These are precisely the kinds of questions which legislators now raise about education and

which give rise to fiscal and educational accountability legislation. Whether the legislature will be able to resist asking "hard questions" about the very largest item in its budget would remain to be seen. Market accountability will mitigate some of the pressure. However, an aging, non-parent and fiscally conservative population--adults who are not in a position to judge the quality of schooling immediately and who have no direct interest--may still be inclined to ask "hard questions."

State Paternalism

As alluded to above, state legislatures have often acted paternalistically toward local school boards. They have prescribed the minimum qualifications of teachers that school systems may hire. They have prescribed textbooks, courses, class size, contact hours, etc. They have begun to require state monitoring of local school output through state-administered tests. In short, they have acted to supplant local decision-making in areas wherein they judge local decisionmakers to be deficient. State paternalism is not new; it also shows no sign of abating. If state legislatures have been unwilling to delegate full control to locally elected officials (or officials appointed by elected local officials), will they be willing to delegate full control to privately owned and operated schools? Perhaps market accountability will suffice. Or perhaps state legislatures will, from time to time, believe that they have a better idea.

Interest Group Pressures

All types of interest groups have secured legislation favoring their interests. While vouchers appear likely to decentralize operational control, they centralize financial and other controls over schools. The

potential power of central government will increase. Whether and how that potential power will be exercised would remain to be seen.

To some extent, the availability of schools of choice should remove the perceived need of some interest groups to secure legislation to alter the schools in their preferred direction. Those who wish prayer in the schools can enroll their children in religiously-oriented schools. Those who favor or disfavor sex education can make the appropriate enrollment decision. Those who believe in evolution or creationism can act accordingly. The question is whether the availability of choice would function as an escape valve for those with strongly held views. Would interest groups find the local school market responsive to their desires? Would they seek state assistance to counteract a lack of desired services? Or would interest groups wish to impose their needs or views on all schools to ensure the availability of what they seek? If so, the strengthened state role in education would present the clear mechanism.

Interest groups obviously range beyond curricular choices. Organized teachers, administrators, teacher educators--the members of the education establishment--may well perceive the need to protect their own interests through legislation. They may perceive the need to regulate their sense of good educational practice. Civil rights groups may well want to ensure that admission and expulsion decisions are fairly made. Patriotic groups may well wish to see that schools do not teach subversive ideas. Fiscal conservatives may well want to ensure that public funds are not squandered on basket-weaving and the like. All of these groups will have a more direct pipeline to the state than is currently the case, should the marketplace disappoint them.

Majority/Minority Struggles

Much legislation in education has resulted from the clash of majority and minority interests at the local level. Majority votes and decisionmaking for the majority often conflict with minority interests. In the past, conflict has given rise to civil rights legislation, legislation for the handicapped, compensatory education, legislation for the gifted and so on. The availability of schools of choice will accommodate some of the demand for attention to minority views. It seems certain, however, that whatever the arrangement for financing and providing education, there will remain majority and minority views. A priori, elements of a voucher system will create new coalitions and new majority and minority experiences. It is inevitable that some will see recourse to legislation as advantageous.

The forces that have led to pluralistic, public decisionmaking concerning education will not disappear under vouchers. Some who are dissatisfied with their current options will be content with the new choices available to them. Others will find the choices open to them still inadequate. To the extent that the state tries to resolve disappointments or perceived inadequacies through regulation, the bureaucratic apparatus associated with public schooling will re-emerge, only it will grow at the state rather than at the local level. To the extent that the state leaves the child's right to choice in education to the vicissitudes of the marketplace, litigation will be the means for solving problems of market failure or of perceived violations of rights. Rights of private association and equal opportunity will still need to be balanced along with students' rights to "appropriate" education or choice and the state's fundamental

interest in education. These issues will be made more complicated by public funding of the private sector. It will be a very long time before resolution of these questions will allow any sound judgment about how efficiently or effectively a voucher system meets individual and state goals for education.

CONCLUSION

Our purpose in this essay has been to evaluate educational vouchers in the light of the forces which have shaped the public schools. It is our contention that many, if not most, of these forces will not simply disappear if vouchers are enacted. In order to understand the nature of schools under a voucher system, we need to anticipate how these forces would play themselves out in the new context. We began by observing that public schools were brought into being to serve the social, economic, and political needs of the state. Under a voucher system, the state will not cease to be interested in the attainment of these goals. The state will need an independent capability to assure itself that its goals for socialization to a common culture, preparation of students for occupational life, and the inculcation of democratic values are achieved. The state will thus continue to be interested in the effectiveness of schooling. Because so much state money will continue to be expended, the state will continue to be interested in the efficiency with which schools operate. And because equality of opportunity is such a central value in American democracy, the state will remain interested in equality of educational opportunity. The way that the state will assure itself of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity is through the means of legislation, regulation, and bureaucratization.

It is not enough for voucher advocates to espouse the virtues of competition, efficiency, and choice. They must be prepared to explain how schools under vouchers will accommodate the states' goals effectively, efficiently, and equitably. They must be prepared to

explain how we will not re-create an even more onerous regulatory apparatus over schools. It should be clear by now that we believe that the potential for the development of such an appratus is large.

Regulation of vouchers is not, in itself, an intrinsically negative possibility. However, the potential need for regulation that we have described is a symptom of a more fundamental problem with the voucher concept: the achievement of public goals through the private market. Under the current system of financing schools, we resolve tensions between public and private interests by pursuing pluralistic goals through public decisionmaking in the public sector and by allowing individualistic goals to be pursued in the privately-funded and operated private sector. Private control over the public interest has been avoided over the course of this nation's history by linking accountability for the pursuit of public goals to public funding of institutions. Public funding of the private sector without the public accountability that accompanies pluralistic decision-making is unlikely to occur. Where problems have occurred because public accountability mechanisms have overreached their capacity for achieving positive results, the solutions will not be found by extending those mechanisms to the private sector or by seeking to avoid the public sector--and its problems--with a voucherized escape hatch. The public interest must still be served. We must seek to find ways to serve it better while balancing its pursuit with responsiveness to individual needs.

NOTES

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[17]John E. Coons and Stephen Sugarman, Education by Choice, p. 83.

[18]Patricia M. Lines, "State Regulation of Private Education," Phi Delta Kappan, October 1982, pp. 119-123.

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[31]Arthur E. Wise, Legislated Learning.